

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Tuesday, June 17. 1707.

When People have a Variety of Evils pressing them at the same Time, they generally fix their Clamour upon one Particular, and the Noise of that is apt to drown all the rest; Physicians say, a Man can feel but one Pain at a Time, so that if one Part of the Body was tortur'd by Incisions, Amputation, or the like, any Cutting or Wounding in another Part would not be felt, while that superiour Torment was in its Extreme.

We find it so very much in the Case before us, the Grievance of the Wine and Brandy has made such a Noise in the World, that really the Affair of Tobacco, of which I spoke of in my last, and which in its Effects is as great or worse, tho' to the common Apprehension less familiar, is not describ'd, nor the People under a proportion'd Concern about it; and thus it fares with us in another Case, which if rightly consider'd,

would perhaps embark some other People in a Concern about it, that yet appear not moved at it, and this is the importing *Via Scotland* Things, not prohibited only by the intervening Accidents of the War, but such things as are prohibited by a settled establish'd Prohibition in a due and national Consideration, for the Good of our Trade, the Encouragement of our Manufactures, and the Employment of our Poor; and these are such as *French* and *East-India* Silks, in which Manufacture I perswade my self, few of the Properties of the *Scots* Men are particularly and originally concern'd.

I name this here upon two Accounts, and have reserv'd them to this Paper, for the more distinct mentioning them, that they may be suited to the Understanding of the Readers in their Consideration of the rest of this Matter.

I have often hinted, that it would have been for the publick Good of *England* to have had an open Trade with *France*, as *Scotland*, when there was such a Kingdom, had, and as the *Dutch* have now; but I must add two particular Restrictions, which I would have taken with it, that I may be rightly understood, and these are;

1. That if this open Trade should be supposing our high Duties upon Wine and Brandy should remain.

2. That such Prohibitions as are laid on *French* Manufactures, as interfere with our own, should also remain.

1. That our high Duties remain; the Reasons for our high Duties on Wine and Brandy are very good, and very easie to be apprehended, and they are;

1. Because if taken off, the *French* Wine is so particularly pleasing to our People, and the Quantity we drink so exceeding great, that we shall (1.) forsake all other Sorts of Drinking, I mean as to Wine; and (2.) import so great a Quantity, as will abundantly overrun the Quantities of *English* Goods the *French* will take of us, and so turn the Ballance of Trade against us as it formerly was, and take the Reason for opening the Trade quite away.

2. Because it is much more profitable for us to have our Wines from *Portugal*, *Italy*, and *Spain*, than from *France*; because the first three take nothing from us but our own Manufactures, which are the Employment of our Lands and Poor, and the other by over-ballancing our Manufactures, will drain us of our ready Money to make good the Difference.

I think, these are good Reasons, why the high Duties should remain on Wine and Brandy, since as Dearness of Goods lessens the Consumption, so tho' the Trade were open, and some who had not equal Value for, or Occasion to spare their Money as others, would have *French* Wine whatever it cost; yet others again, among whom all the middling Sort of Wine Drinkers would stay where they are, and the common Draught as we call it, would be *Portugal* Wine still, to the publick Advantage of Trade, and general Support of our Manufactures, which are the Wealth of the Kingdom, and much more so than ever, now we have another

Sister-Kingdom to employ, and take care for; full of an able and numerous Off-spring whose Prosperity is equally our Interest with our own, and ought to be equally our Concern.

2. I say, that the Prohibitions of Trade, which are laid on not merely by the Accident of the War, but purely to preserve and support our own Manufacture, and employ our own Poor, ought by no means to be taken off, nor do I mean the removing them, when I speak of an open Trade——

There are always needful Prohibitions and Limitations in Trade, which are thought proper to be maintain'd between Nations, who are nevertheless in Peace and good Terms one with another, but are found necessary to the respective Kingdoms for the Support of their own Subjects, the Encouragement of their own Manufactures, and the particular Interests of their several States, as Circumstances may require. The several Prohibitions of Manufactures, Corn, Cattle, &c. between *England* and *Ireland*, and formerly between *England* and *Scotland*, are Demonstrations of this; and I need go no farther for a Proof of the Assertion.

Thus when I say, we should, if in our Sences, have an open Trade with *France*, I do not say we should take off all our just Prohibitions which are made on Account of Trade, for that would be to return us to the first Condition of Trade, in which we were at the Beginning of this War, and when we really traded with *France* above 600000 *l.* Sterling per Annum in ready Money out of our Pockets: But that we should take off those general Prohibitions of Commerce, which on the Accident of War have been thought proper to be made between the Nations——And I need go no farther back for this, than to the Interval of Trade we had with *France*, between the Peace of *Reswick*, and the Declaration of this last War; when as I have formerly demonstrated, we traded with *France* 90000 *l.* Sterling per Month to our Gain, the Difference of which, according to that known Rule, that all Ballances of general Trade must be made in Specie, fill'd us so full of *French* Pistoles, that some ignorant People

frighted us with their being brought over in Casks full to bribe our Parliament, upon which the Story of the Oyster Barrel and the Poussineers was, with ridiculous Jest enough, founded: and upon which we had, if I mistake not the Account, near 1100000 Pistoles coined at the Tower into English Guineas.

This is all by the by, but is added to introduce the Argument, that these Prohibitions ought by no means to be removed in Case of an open Trade. —

As to what they are, 'tis short and evident; such as Alamodes and Lustrings, and all Sorts of wrought Silks, from *Caudbeck*, &c. Glass from *Normandy*, Gloves, Ribands, and the like.

If any Man ask so weak a Question, why these should still remain prohibited, the Answer is short; because our own People, by Practice and some Instruction, have learned to make them all at home, and they now employ great Numbers of our Poor—That by Disuse of the *French* since they were prohibited, our Gentry are accustomed to the Wearing of our own, and well enough pleas'd with them: But lastly, and more especially because by the Cheapness of the Materials and of Labour, together with their long Usage, the *French* are able without those necessary Prohibitions to make them either somewhat better or somewhat cheaper, and so to carry the Trade away from us.

As these are good Reasons, why the Trade being open, the Prohibitions should remain; so I think they are very good Reasons, why those Goods, which are on these very Accounts prohibited either from *France* or elsewhere, should not have been brought into *England* thro' *Scotland*, and 'tis a very unhappy Circumstance, that this had no Consideration in the Treaty, where but two Words of a Clause to prevent the Import of foreign Goods prohibited, had put a Stop to the Occasions of all this Clamour, and we had found no Room to reproach one another on these Accounts.

'Tis true, the Quantity of these Goods, Silks, &c. are not equal to the Articles we are now particularly uneasy about, and I shall not endeavour to raise new Objections; but I must say, these things make the Frauds

the more considerable, and Trade as well as the publick Revenue are very considerably influenced by them— And in this as in the other Articles, the Importers are still English Men, and I see no Room they have left them to complain, if the Government does take Methods to distinguish between a capitulated Liberty conditioned for in a Treaty, and an assumed encroaching Claim to the same Liberty, in Defence of stated and open Frauds, both to the Oppression of Trade, and the Damage of the publick Revenue.

Upon this Distinction the whole Matter turns; I cannot see the least Reason the Scots have to be dissatisfy'd, if their Properties are secured; nay, they will be better for it, as the Market will be higher abroad, and their Consumption the cheaper; and as they have no Reason to be dissatisfy'd, neither will they be dissatisfy'd, or any Way discontent about it: Let the Law take its Course, the QUEEN will have Equity, as well as the Subjects will have Law, and the House of Lords may decide it at last.

And thus, Gentlemen, all this Broil may cease, and the whole Debate be at an End; 'tis a Difficulty just at the Entrance, when it is once got over, it can never happen again, the Business is so to settle the Matter, that the just Claims of the Union may be maintain'd, and yet the QUEEN have a just and equitable Relief against Frauds; that *Scotland* may not be restrain'd their full and legal Liberty, and free Intercourse of Trade, according to the 4th Article of the Treaty, and yet that *England* may not be trick'd, abus'd, and impos'd upon by Knaves of her own or other Nations, in making the Union a Cover to their Thefts and Plunderings of the Government; that they may not raise War between the real and literal Sense of the Union, between the Voice of the Union, and the Voice of them that made it.

'Tis hard, Gentlemen, that Tricks and Cheats should invade the Union in its Cradle, and just before it has learnt to speak plain, its Words should be turned and twisted to the Injury of any Body; if therefore the true Intent and Meaning of the Union cannot be reconciled to the *Distion*, to the Letter of it—'Tis unhappy for *England*,
and